

REMARKS

We are in receipt of the Office Action mailed February 14, 2006, and the above amendments and following remarks are made in light thereof.

Claims 1-34 are pending in the application.

Pursuant to the Office Action, the Examiner withdrew claims 1-26 from consideration. Claims 27-32 were rejected. Specifically, Claims 30, 31, 33 and 34 were rejected under 35 USC 112 for indefiniteness. Claims 27-32 were provisionally rejected for double patenting over Claims 1-36 of USSN 10/666,048. Claims 27 and 29-34 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) over Markel et al. U.S. 4,288,407.

In response, Applicant has amended claims 30, 31, 33 and 34 to substitute "consisting of" for "comprising," thus rendering the claimed Markush groups definite. Applicant requests that the requirement of responding to the provisional double patenting rejection be held in abeyance until such time as the Examiner indicates that the pending claims describe allowable subject matter.

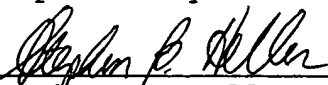
Turning to the rejection for anticipation over Markel et al. Claim 27 of the pending application, the sole pending independent claim, requires that the electrothermal fluidized bed furnace ("EFB furnace") used to practice the claimed method

have its nozzles for introducing the fluidizing gas be oriented so that the fluidizing gas is introduced horizontally into the conical section of the furnace. In contrast, the nozzles in Markel et al. are oriented to cause the fluidizing gas to enter the conical section in a vertical direction. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the Claim 27 of the present application is not anticipated by Markel et al. All the remaining claims depend from Claim 27, and are thus not anticipated by Markel et al. for at least this same reason.

In addition, by way of the foregoing amendment, Claims 2-13, which were among the claims that had been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner, have been amended so that they depend from Claim 27. Each of these claims describes a further aspect of the furnace used in the claimed method that is not disclosed or suggested by Markel et al.

Accordingly, Applicant believes that the pending claims are in condition for allowance, and an early Office Action in this regard is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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